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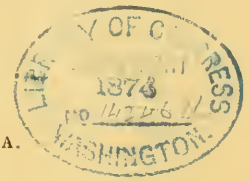
# MONICA;

OR,

# The Village Blacksmith.

A COMEDY.

DRAMATIZED BY GEORGE WARDMAN.




PITTSBURGH, PA.

1874

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# SYNOPSIS.

PAUL VAN MILGEM, *alias* Ricketicketack, the happy blacksmith of Westhmal, loses his wife who leaves him one child. He grows reckless at his loss, becomes a drunken character and finally is compelled to sell his shop. He entrusts the care of his infant daughter to his old school-master, and himself joins the French army where he receives merited promotion. Returning from Egypt he visits the scenes of his early life in search of his child, who, meanwhile, having lost her old protector, the school-master, has become a drudge at the Van Dael farm, where Jan Van Dael champions her against the cruelty of his mother. Naturally a strong feeling of attachment grows up between the two young people. The first act introduces the people at the Van Dael farm. The second presents the Colonel on his return in search of his daughter; his appearance in the old blacksmith shop,—the famous song of Ricketicketack, (a most effective scene,)—his accidental meeting with his daughter—how she is recognized, and the affecting parting between Monica and Jan. In the third act Jan's sufferings are vividly portrayed, a secret sorrow of Monica hinted at. The Colonel's determination to bestow the hand of his daughter on a military friend. Again the song of Ricketicketack and a happy denouement. Each act affords splendid opportunities for displaying emotion—the plot is enveloped in a mystery which is not too obscure, and the interest increases from first to last, with happily interspersed bits of humor to relieve the heavy work. Each act closes with a natural tableau.

# MONICA;

OR,

# THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.

## *A COMEDY.*

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COL. VAN MILGEM, *father of Monica.*
JAN VAN DAEL, *a farm lad.*
LIEUT. ADOLPH BROECK.
LUDWIG, BARDULPH, KONRAD, } *Smiths.*
PETER, *a simpleton.*
A SCRIBE.
MAGDALEN, *afterwards Monica.*
MISTRESS VAN DAEL.
BARBARA, KATE, } *Daughters to Mad. Van Dael.*
GRANNY, *an old woman.*
*Peasants, Attendants, &c.*

SCENE: *Brabant and Antwerpt.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Interior of a farm-house kitchen. Magdalen seated at a spinning-wheel.* [*Looks up at clock.*]

*Mag.*—Only an hour gone of the long day and I am already tired; I never feel rested. How slowly the hands move on the dial! Happy are they who know kind friends and gentle treatment. I should be happy too, perhaps, if I had strength to do all my mistress imposes on me. But my power to work grows less as the duties increase. Happiness for me can only come with the long rest in the grave—so cold and yet so kind. No blows, no aching bones, no weariness there. But I was happy once, so long ago, I scarce remember it, except when Ricketicketack comes to my mind. That is to me like the warm sun rising on a chilly morn. Ah, Ricketicketack! how happy you make me, if only for a single moment at a time.

[*Sings.*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
The iron is warm—
Up with the arm,
Now strike one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

I wonder what it is that makes me sing that song, so silly yet so sweet. It comes when I feel most weak and weary, and then for the moment I feel so happy. I love Ricketack and it seems Ricketack must love me also or it would not come so often to comfort me. It loves me better than anybody does—no not better than Jan,—dear, good Jan,—he is kind to me also, and I—

*Enter* MISTRESS VAN DAEL *hastily, then halting to* MONICA, *thus:*

What's this, you lazy lump! There you sit staring before you like a stuck pig! [*Advances and strikes* MAG.] Make up the fire directly or I'll be after you with a stick and give it to you well, you good for nothing sloth. [*Goes to the stairway.*] Up, up! you lazy-bones, all! Must I come to fetch you down, sleepy-heads? Come! look alive! Kate, Barbara, Jan! As I'm alive here's five o'clock and the whole set of you not done snoring!

*Magdalen.*—Mistress, the coffee is ready, will you—

*Mistress Van Dael.*—You think of nothing but eating. The day goes by and nothing is done but eat, eat. Bring me my coffee, and bestir yourself or I'll fetch you another sound box on the ear. Set the table!

[MAG. *places cups and a loaf on the table.* KATE *and* BARBARA *descend the stairs yawning, &c.*]

*Kate.*—Oh, I'm so sleepy.

*Mrs. Van D.*—Eat your breakfast.

*Barbara.*—I could lie in bed forever.

*Mrs. Van D.*—Eat and away to your work. [*Serves each a slice of bread and half a slice to Mag. standing by the fire.*] *Enter* JAN, *going to Magdalen.*

*Jan.*—Good morning, Magdalen.

*Mag.*—Thank you Jan, good morning.

*Jan.*—[*taking a seat at the table*] good morning, Mother, Kate, Barbara. [*Sips his coffee thoughtfully.*]

*Barbara.*—Look at that "poke," standing by the fire.

*Kate.*—A lazy, good-for-nothing.

[*All arise from the table.*]

*Mrs. Van D.*—Now, away to your work, all of you!

(JAN *goes to* MAGDALEN *and secretly passes her his bread. Exuent* KATE, BARBARA *and* JAN.]

*Mrs. Van D.*—Put the cream in the churn while I fetch Bruno to turn the wheel. [*Exit.*]

*Mag.*—[*solus*] Poor Jan! You hunger to feed me. Your bread is moist with tears, brave heart! You would starve that

might eat; and you suffer to ease my pain. I am not quite lone.

*Mrs. Van D.*—[*re-enters furiously and strikes* MAG.]—See, you bominable huzzy! You have given the poor beast nothing to at yesterday, and there he is starved to death. But I'll teach ou! Here! [*Strikes her again.*] You won't say a word, von't you? You obstinate good-for-nothing! It isn't true, suppose, that you gave the dog nothing to eat? Eh? Speak vill you, or I'll wring your neck for you!

*Mag.*—Mistress, I gave the dog his food yesterday, and there t stands by his kennel; he has not touched it and the dish is uite full.

*Mrs. Van D.*—The dish fu'l, indeed, you lying monkey! You illed the dish this morning! Do you think I don't know your ricks? But I'll make you repent it! Yes, you shall pay for t; you shall turn the wheel yourself. So come! in with you!

*Mag.*—Have mercy, mistress.

*Mrs. Van D.*—[*seizing a stick from a bundle near the fire.*] Come! quick! will you get into the wheel or not?

*Mag.*—Oh! do have mercy on me! I will turn the wheel, but or God's sake don't beat me.

*Jan.*—[*enters hastily—rushes before his mother and raises* MAG. *rom her knees.*]—Mother, how can you go on so? It's ever nd again the same story. I can't turn my back to go to work ut I hear you scolding and raving at Magdalen as if she was a umb beast. If you want her dead you'd better by half kill her t once. Don't you see that she's ill and wasting away? Ah nother, do let her alone! Else see, (mind I tell you,) I'll be ff with the first soldiers that go by, and you won't see me gain my life long.

*Mrs. Van D.*—I tell you she shall take the dog's place in the hurning-wheel. I ll teach her to let him starve.

*Jan.*—What's that you say? She—Magdalen—run in the hurning-wheel? So, ho! mother, that's going too far! Now ell me quick, do you really mean it? Quick! Quick!

*Mrs. Van D.*—Look you there, how the fool stands shaking ke an aspen! And what then if I do really mean it?

*Jan.*—This then, if you mean it mother, as soon as Magdalen in the wheel I am out of the house. Chains would not hold ne, and if you won't believe me when I say it, I swear it by all—

*Mag.*—[*in terror,*] Jan! Jan!

*Jan.*—You shall not go in the wheel!

[*Scene closes.*]

CENE II.—*Road through a field—harvesters passing with sickles, bundles of grain, etc. Enter* BARBARA *followed by* PETER.

*Peter.*—If you will not wait to listen I must follow.

*Barbara.*—You've followed me all day about the harvest eld. [*Going.*]

*Peter.*—I pray you stop for my last word.

*Barbara.*—I pray your mouth be stopped.

*Peter.*—Hear me, I'm an honest man.

*Barbara.*—A stupid fool!

*Peter.*—You are an honest, hard-working woman, able to hold a plow or swing a flail; I need a wife. I am learning to read now, and next year I shall set up as a school-master. I will be a learned man.

*Barbara.*—You have no sense.

*Peter.*—And offer you—[*she goes*] but stay! stay just to hear—

*Barbara.*—[*still going*] Neither stays nor buts for such as you. [*Exit.*]

*Peter.*[*solus*]—The woman's a fool—of course—they're all alike. There's that girl of Mistress Van Dael—Magdalen. I watched her from the round hill for hours to-day. She was sent out to lead the cow to pasture and keep it from fence-breaking, and there the girl sits all day under the lone beach tree in the alder thicket, sighing and singing her Ricketicketack, and the cow is free to roam and break through hedges at will. The girl is a witch. Anybody can see that in her white face; like a corpse; and her staring eyes. Well, she shan't bewitch me. I'll away to my reading-book and be a learned man. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*Sunset—an alder thicket—road beyond winding away over the undulating moor toward a village in the distance*—MAGDALEN *seated beneath a tree weaving a wreath of leaves and grasses.*

*Mag*—Tears again, all day. I feel no pain, but still I weep for loneliness. This will not do. I'll try my old friend, Ricketicketack. [*Sings.*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
The iron is warm,
Up with your arm,
Now, strike one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

There, I feel better now. What a strange song it is and such a good friend. I wonder who taught it to me? Mother? Father, may be? I cannot tell. It comes to me as tears flow, involuntarily, and I love it without knowing what it means It is my only friend—no, not the only one. Jan is my truest friend after all. What a brave lad he is! It almost makes me happy to think of good Jan. [*Sings.*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
The iron is warm,
Up with your arm,
Now, strike one, two
Ricketicketoo.

But the cow! [*rising,*] it won't do to forget the cow any longer. I have been neglecting my work; that won't do. [*Goes to the side.*] Ah! yonder is the contented creature on the freshest of grass. I'll take a seat on my favorite hillock again. [*Seats*

*herself on a small eminence over-looking the road toward the village.*] I wonder if any body in that town ever knew me. Day after day I see people coming along that road, but no one ever comes for me. How could anybody in a great city like that ever think of me? There is a road for everybody, and I sit here and wait and wait, and nobody comes. I cannot live in this loneliness.

[JAN'S *voice calling.*]

Magdalen! Magdalen!

[*She rises hastily and comes slowly forward, meeting* JAN *at the entrance.*]

*Jan.*—[*leads her to a small hillock,*] Sit here beside me, Magdalen. [*Takes a slice of bread and meat and a cup from under his smock.*] There, you have something to eat. And see, I will fill this cup with water from the spring, yonder. [*Goes out.*]

*Magdalen.*—Good Jan! I could not live without his kindness. [*Eats.*]

[*He returns.*]

*Jan.*—Here is the water, cool and pure. I knew you must be suffering for food, as you had nothing since early morning, and then so little; and now the sun is almost down.

*Mag.*—God will reward you Jan, for thus helping and comforting me in my misery. I thank you very much for all your goodness and kindness to me. [*He weeps.*] Jan, my best friend, do not grieve yourself so much about me; your tears hurt me more than your mother's blows.

*Jan.*—Forgive her Magdalen, for my sake; for if you were to die without having forgiven her, and without saying a prayer for her, she could not rest quiet in the grave.

*Mag.*—I have nothing to forgive her, Jan. There is no hatred in me; I do not even think any more, when you are with me, on what I have to bear; every thing of the kind is already forgotten.

*Jan.*—Don't deceive me, Magdalen. It is not possible to forget such barbarous treatment.

*Mag.*—I've told you the same thing before, but you don't understand me; and indeed I hardly understand myself. When I am beaten and knocked about to be sure my body suffers, but my mind remains free and goes on dreaming of mysterious things that I know not of, which dart hither and thither before me and cheer and gladden me. These dreams comfort my soul; in them I forget everything; they speak to me of another and a better life, and give me hope that I shall not always be forsaken. Will God in heaven be a father to me? or shall I see my mother before I die? I know not.

*Jan.*—Your parents are dead, Magdalen. My mother has often told me so. But don't let that make you unhappy. Just see what a pair of arms I have already. In a few years I shall be a man, and a strong one. Live 'till then, Magdalen, and I

will work for you from morning 'till night, and be your servant forever.

*Mag.*—You my servant? No, that won't do, Jan. I shall not be here long. Relief must come in one form or another. I cannot live this way long.

*Jan.*—Magdalen, you never knew father or mother; from a little child you have been brought up in our house, and there you have had to bear more than enough for any two mortal creatures. If that was to go on so, you must die sure enough. I see death would soon come to your relief at this rate. But if from this time forward you are left alone and well treated, don't you think you might live then?

*Mag.*—Live then? Who knows when their time shall come? I know what you are going to do, but why turn her hatred upon yourself?

*Jan.*—Why? Why that I don't know myself. But this I can tell you: that if you have one fixed thought or dream that follows you everywhere, I have one of my own too, that never leaves me,—neither in the hardest work nor fastest sleep. And this thought is that I must make good the evil that my mother lays upon you. Ah, Magdalen, I can't express myself so well, nor so strongly as you can, but for God's sake don't doubt what I say. From the day that you die, not a stroke of work more will I do, and they'll soon lay me in the church-yard beside you. And if you ask me why—why I can't tell that either. Look you, I have a heart under my smock after all; you are a poor thing without father or mother and that's enough for me. Ah, only do live 'till I am of age, Magdalen; my words will—

[*Voice in the distance*]—Home with the cow!

*Jan.*—[*disappearing among the bushes*] I shall come in directly. Go along, she won't beat you now.

[*Curtain falls.*]

## ACT II.

Scene I.—[*Interior of a Blacksmith shop—smiths at work.*]

*Bardulph.*—Yes, I might have been a field-marshal by this time only for my mother, who could not bear to lose me. I was a splendid child.

*Konrad.*—Spoiled in the making.

*Bar.*—Hush, you fool. My parents would not hear to my leaving home. They apprenticed me to Master Ludwig there, out of pure tenderness and consideration for my good looks and figure.

*Konrad.*—A spoiled carcass truly. It would serve a better purpose lying upon the field for the fattening of crows.

*Bar.*—Cease your chatting, idiot! what do you know of genius and sentiment? I say I might have worn epaulets to-day had

it not been for my parents, whom I foolishly permitted to rule me when I was young. Look at the emperor now, who at Toulon was only a sub-lieutenant.

*Kon.*—He was a full lieutenant.

*Bar.*—A sub-lieutenant I say, and now he rules the world. I have in me, I tell you, a valiant spirit and a talent for siege and campaigns, and I have been told I could easily have commanded a corps before now but for this filthy trade of soot and smoke and sweat and slavery, which defrauds me out of a baton and gold lace and—

[*Voice without*] Hallo! within there! my horse wants shoeing.

[*Enter Col. Van Milgem and Lieutenant Brock.*]

*Ludwig.*—Which foot, your worship?

*Col.*—The near fore foot.

*Lud.*—I will go and examine it myself. [*Exit.*]

*Col.*—[*Examines tools with interest, then, aside, to* LIEUTENANT] Adolph, these tongs were made and used by my father. This hammer has many a day caused my boyish arm to ache. Here he worked, and I learned to be a smith. This shop and these tools were once his, then mine, now a stranger's. Can you wonder at my emotion?

*Lieut.*—I do not wonder, but pray be calm.

*Ludwig.*—[*re-entering*] I have examined the hoof, Colonel, and will soon have the beast again in traveling condition.

[*Throws a rough "shoe-shape" on the forge.*]

Come, Bardulph, to the bellows! lively now!

[BARDULPH *blows the bellows, creating a ruddy light and jet of bright sparks. The work of forming the shoe goes on, by* LUDWIG *and* BARDULPH.]

*Kon.*—[*working at a vise on the bench, aside*] That oldish one looks at things as if he wanted to buy the whole shop. If he isn't a smith in disguise I am no longer a man of talent.

[*The shoe having been formed, the* COL. *takes it in a pair of tongs, looks at it and throws it back into the fire.*]

That will never do. It is too clumsy. It would cripple the brute. [*Throws off coat,*] Give me the tongs and hammer! [*cheerily.*] Now, lads! look alive! blow away, and be ready to strike! Here we are now! I'll give the time and we'll turn out a shoe fit for the Emperor's nag. Attention!

[*Beating the time on the anvil.*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
The iron is warm,
Up with your arm,
Now, strike one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
Strike while it's hot,
And tarry not.
Again one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

There! Look at the shoe now! [KONRAD *takes the shoe and exit.*]

*Bar.*—Wonderful! and I know that is just the kind of a soldier I would be now, if I had not been apprenticed to a smith.

*Lud.*—I am surprised, indeed, to see such work, but the soldiers of this day know other things than fighting. But here comes KONRAD. Your horse is shod, sir.

*Col.*—[*shaking hands*] Good day, men. I like to shake the honorable hand of your craft. [*Laying two coins on the anuil.*] Good day. One for the master and one for the men. Drink my health together, and good bye to you. [*Exit Col. and Lieut.*]

*Konrad.*—Colonel! Colonel! I say it and I'll stand to it, he has been a smith some day like the rest of us. From the manner in which you eyed him, master, I believe you must know him, or think you do.

*Lud.*—Well, I never in my life knew but one man that could knock off a shoe like that - so light and neat and so handily; and I am much mistaken if the grand Colonel is'nt just Karl Van Milgem himself; he you know—no, you can't know either—he that the folks used to call Ricketicketack.

*Bar.*—What! he the merry smith of Westhmal? I've heard talk enough about Karl Ricketicketack. It was his story that caused me to dislike the trade. He was a good-for-nothing fellow—a drunken dog, fit only to turn the village upside down. No, no, that will never do; the Colonel does'nt look like one of that kind. Oh! pity I had'nt gone to the army to be a Colonel.

*Kon.*—Pity indeed you had not gone to the devil. But master, tell us the story of Karl Ricketicketack.

*Lud.*—Well men, our day's work is paid for twice over, so we can afford to let our fire go down. The Colonel is Karl Van Milgem, sure enough. Let us step out and sit beneath the shade of the trees and I'll tell you his story as shortly as I can and then you can say what you think about it. [*Exit and scene closes—re-enter front.*]

About sixteen years ago there lived in this very village, a young fellow who was married to the prettiest girl in all the country about. She came from Moll; and so fond were they of one another that it was a wonder and a pleasure to the villagers to see them Well, he was Karl Van Milgem, of whom we are talking. That was the fellow for work; early in the morning and late at night he was at it 'till his face ran down with sweat, and all the while he kept time with that nice little tune the Colonel knows so well; so that among ourselves every one called him Karl Ricketicketack. He was always in spirits, and a regular witty fellow; there never came a word out of his mouth but what might set one laughing. And so in all Westhmal there was no such favorite as the merry smith. He had been married a couple of years and had no children; at last, however, he was expecting one. At this news he was merrier than ever; there was no end to his Ricketicketack, and at times

one got quite afraid he was going out of his senses with joy; for when the fit took him cart-ropes couldn't hold him. At last the day came and he had his wish; but, poor fellow! his wife never got over it. She lies buried in our church-yard there where the iron cross stands. From that moment Karl was never the same man again. He left his hammer and anvil to themselves and didn't light his forge twice in a week; and he began to drink as though he would make an end of himself. All his songs were forgotten and he led such a life that he was a scandal to the whole village. When he came home drunk he would go on like a downright madman. But the servant-girl that lived with him and took care of the child had one way that never failed to quiet him; she used to put the little girl on his knee, and however far gone he might be, as soon as he saw the child it seemed as though an enchantment had come over him. He would laugh out as merrily as ever and ride cock-horse with the little thing, to the old tune of Ricketack. That Karl was ever at bottom a bad man, I don't believe. Every body knew well enough that it was his wife's death that had made him desperate and drunken; for every time that he crossed the church-yard and came to the iron cross, even if he was so that he couldn't keep his feet, he'd break out into tears before all the world. And so every one had great compassion for him, and the neighbors took care that the child wanted for nothing, without saying anything to him about it. So things went on for three years 'till Karl was suddenly taken ill and had to keep his bed and that for a pretty long time too. All this while his friends and the clergyman too talked so much to him about mending his ways that he seemed quite cured of drinking. But now he had got something else into his head. He had made up his mind to leave the village, where the sight of his wife's grave was forever reminding him of his loss; so he sold off his smithy, with everything in it just as it stood, to my father, God rest his soul! and early one morning off he went with his child on his arm away over the heath, without telling a soul where to, and away he stayed; and from that day 'till this neither he nor the child has been seen nor heard of.

*Bar.*—Ah! the colonel is Karl Ricketicketack, that there is no doubt of.

*Lud.*—He it is and no one else. Did not you see how he took up the tools and looked at them? Well, everything that my father or I had bought, he laid down again quite carelessly as you saw, but every thing that had belonged to Karl Ricketack he looked at as though he would devour it. Did you not notice how he looked with almost fondness on the old hammer and tongs that were here before I saw the shop? Even you must have noticed that. And then his way of speaking, just like the rest of us; his handiness at the forge, and above all his little tune, Yes, yes! that's a lad out of our village I'll wager this piece of coin. Who'd have thought it? And now a colonel—a real out-and-out colonel.

*Kon.*—A wonderful story.

*Bar.*—Yes, but if I had gone with the emperor to Egypt—

*Kon*—There would have been one fool less in Europe.

*Lud.*—Now men, let us go to our dinners and be ready for a holiday. No more work to-day. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II—[*Office of a Notary*—COL. *and* LIEUT, *seated*,]

*Col.*—These village clerks spend more time a-field than at the desk. They find the plow more profitable than the pen, I warrant you. But here he comes. [*Enter* SCRIBE.]

*Scribe.*—Col. Van Milgem, your obedient servant. I beg that you will be graciously pleased to pardon my—

*Col.*—Never mind that, my good friend, but have you any news for me of my child.

*Scribe.*—No, Colonel, not yet.

*Col.*—God help me then! Must I indeed give up all hope?

*Scribe.*—Not so, sir. Be so good, Colonel, as to hear my report, and you will find, so far from giving up all hope, we are, in all probabilitiy on the right track..... On the occasion of your last visit you left me money enough to carry on my researches regardless of cost, and you may be assured that I have spared no pains to earn your favor and the thousand francs you promised me, in case of success. Hear now the sum of the information I have got together. When Karl Van Milgem [*bowing*] left Westhmal with his child, then four years old, he told no one whither he was going and very likely did not know himself, tor very trouble and sorrow. But now I have heard—from yourself, Colonel,—and the result of my researches coincides with your information—that he entrusted his child to the care of an old school-master, Michael Dreissens by name, who lived with his wife in a lonely cottage at some distance from the village. To him he gave the child and a little iron casket, in which he had locked the purchase money of his smithy, and which in case of need the old people were to open, that the child and they might not want for anything. Then he went off to Holland and it is believed joined the French army. At all events he never afterward made any inquiry after his child, at least so I was told at the village, and the people from whom I heard this had themselves known Michael Dreissens.

*Col.*—The people don't know what they say, my friend I wrote twice from Egypt, to inquire after my child, but got no answer. Afterwards, on my return to France, after Kleber's death, I hoped to be able to find her out myself. How my heart beat as I trotted over the heath and came near the spot where the old people's cottage stood! But alas! I found nothing but a heap of ashes. At that my heart was well nigh breaking; what I felt, it is impossible to tell you. Luckily, however, I heard from the people of the place that Driessens had saved himself and little Monica, and gone off and about to see if he could beg a little sum toward making up his loss.

*Scribe.*—Just so, Colonel. The school-master's wife was burnt to a coal; but he got away with your Monica on his back and a little iron casket under his arm. He got a very strong certificate from his parish and set out with the child through the villages about to get help and find some means of making a living. I know from a sure hand that he was seen begging about with little Monica at Meerhout, Olmer or Balen and Moll; at the last place he fell ill and died. It is only since yesterday that I knew where it was that he came to his end. The corporation clerk of Moll, my very good brother in office, has sent me a certificate of his death, and adds that nothing was found about the poor school-master that could lead to any trace of the child, which he well knows I am in search of. Of the iron casket also he says nothing. Do you think, Colonel, Dreissens could have been bad enough to do the child a mischief or leave it behind somewhere in the heath or wood?

*Col.*—Oh no! certainly not! He was my old school-master, and was always my friend—my best friend. When I came to Holland to enlist in the army he begged me, of his own accord, to leave the child with him, both to cheer him up in his old days and for the child's sake, that it might not come into mere strangers' hands. I am assured, my dear sir, that he has left the child some where in good keeping, and the iron casket too.

*Scribe.*—That's what I think myself, Colonel; and as the result of my inquiries leads me to conjecture that Monica must be found somewhere between Reits and Meerhout, I am minded to run over to Moll to-morrow and rummage up all over the villages and farm houses in the neighborhood.

*Col.*—Well said, my friend; so do, your trouble shall not go unrewarded. I have still a few days to spare and will see if I can't do something to help in the matter. To-night we shall sleep at Lichtaest, and to-morrow about mid-day we'll meet you at the clerk of Moll's house, and there we can talk over together what's to be done further. Don't spare the money, my good friend; take a comfortable carriage and don't tire yourself to death for nothing. Good-bye 'till to-morrow, then, and God grant us success! [*Exeunt—scene closes.*]

SCENE III.—[*The beech and alder thicket—enter* COLONEL *and* LIEUTENANT.]

*Lieut.*—Come! come! Colonel, for more than two hours you have apparently been unconscious of your own existence or anything in the world except the object of your thought, but don't be so down-hearted. I can quite understand how you long to meet your child again; but a man like you, who has looked death and the enemy in the face without blinking, shouldn't let himself be bowed down by any ordinary sorrow.

*Col.*—An ordinary sorrow do you call it? And yet it is an ordinary sorrow, Adolph, but not for that the less deep. Just see my friend, in my whole life I have never loved but one

woman. Mere peasant girl though she was, the thought of her has never left me, not even in the hottest field. She is dead, my poor Margaret, but she left me this child, which she gave me at the cost of her life. And now I must fear that this sole relic of my happy days is wandering about as a beggar; that she is actually suffering hunger and thirst, while I am in possession of the means of giving her every comfort in life. I have to think of my dead wife as calling me to account for her child's lot.

*Lieut.*—Come, come, Colonel! you take the matter too imaginatively, but that is not the way to ease your suffering. Look at things a little coolly. A soldier must have self-command enough to bear up under a misfortune, even were it still greater than yours.

*Col.*—Do you think then, my dear Adolph, it is as easy to cover the heart with steel as the body? If that you do, you are much mistaken. I know you flatter yourself you've said good-bye to feeling of every kind, and proud enough you seem of it too; though ten to one you are only deceiving yourself after all. It is six years since you left your native village, is it not? Well, if at this moment your old mother's cottage were to appear in the farthest horizon, what then?

*Lieut.*—[*sorrowfully*] well Colonel, it would cost me some tears.

*Col.*—Then it can't be so very difficult for you to comprehend my giving myself up for a while to the joyful hope of finding my child again, and that I am ready to break out into tears of joy should God bring her to my arms. I have neither father nor mother, brother nor sister—not even an uncle, aunt or cousin. The only being in the wide world to which I am bound by ties of blood, is this child; and when my poor Margaret died she laid it in my arms, and her last words were "Oh, love it always." ..... Adolph, if you were to lay your hand on my heart you would feel how quickly it is beating. Do not be surprised at seeing my eyes moist. Do you see yonder noble beech among the juniper bushes by the brook? That tree heard my first word of love. Under that foliage a shrinking maiden received my avowal. Here everything knows me; grass, heath, brook and tree greet me in silent eloquence. Let us step thither, I should like to see if my name and Margaret's, which I once cut in the bark, are still there.

[Col, *approaches the tree, where he stands with clasped hands and drooping head*—Magdalen's *voice in the distance.*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
The iron is warm—
Up with your arm,
Now, strike one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

*Col.*—Come, come, my friend! every nerve in me quivers. I feel as if death was upon me; something goes through me so!

That was Margaret singing—my dear wife! It was her voice and song. [COL. *catches* LIEUT'S *arm and points to the bushes where* MAGDALEN *is discovered, unaware of their presence.* COL. *goes and kneels beside her, taking one hand.*]

*Col.*—Tell me child, your name?

*Mag.*—Magdalen.

*Col.*—Magdalen! Heavens, it is not she! [*Covers his face with his hand, and refuses* LIEUT'S *offer to assist him to rise.*]

*Mag.*—[*seizing his hand*] Ah sir, what is it makes you so sad? I haven't said anything to hurt you Or is it the tune I was just singing that you can't bear to hear. If that's it, I'm sure I won't sing it any more.

*Col.*—[*reviving*] But tell me, child, who was it taught you that tune?

*Mag.*—I don't know sir; I have known it a long, long time—as long as I can remember anything.

*Col.*—Do you remember when you were quite a little girl, often hearing a great noise—a noise as of smith's hammers?.... [MAGDALEN, *thoughtful, rubs her forehead, but no answer except a look of surprise and wonder.*]

*Col.*—Listen! listen now whether you haven't heard a noise like this? [*Beats time with his riding whip on his hand, and sings*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
Strike while its hot,
And tarry not,
Again, one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

*Mag.*—Yes! yes! Ricketicketack. That's it, [*beating time on her hand.*]

*Col.*—Now my child, do you remember a man's dancing and riding you on his knee to that tune.

*Mag.*—[*Puts her finger to her lip,closes her eyes and then looking looking up thoughtfully, thus:*] The man—the man was—my father.

*Col.*—[*agitated*] But tell me again, my child, was your name Magdalen then? Can you recollect what the man who danced you on his knee called you?

*Mag.*—[*reflecting*] He called me his dear—his dear—his dear Monica! That was it.

*Col.*—My child! my child! [*He clasps her to his bosom—recovering*] But tell me, my child, why I find you in this place and your name changed, and sorrow where there should be joy on your young face. Tell me, how is this? Where is old Michael? How came you here?

*Mag.*—I know nothing of my coming here, nor have I any distinct remembrance of any man to whose care you entrusted me. It seems to me that I have always lived here. Jan's mother was not always kind, but Jan had ever a warm heart, and he cared for me like a good brother. Ah, there comes the

dear, good fellow. [*Struggling.*] Let me go to him; let me tell him of my happiness; let me go. Oh must this be our good-bye. [*Falls on her father's shoulder.*]

[*Enter* JAN, *calling*] Mag—ah! I beg your pardon, sir! I was seeking our Magdalen. [*Monica struggling to get free.*]

*Col.*—Nay, nay, my daughter, you cannot seek further association with the people hereabouts. [*She breaks away and embraces* JAN.] [*Aside*] Ah well, I thought she might have spared me this evident desire to cling to these unhappy associations.

*Mag.*—Jan! Jan! I am going away—far, far from here! I am so happy and yet [*weeping*] I am so sorry too. I would not leave you forever, Jan,—you'll not forget me—your sister who loves you, but who must go away. See, there comes my father; it was of him that the voice within me used to speak; it was for him I looked so long a-down the road, and now he is here, and I must leave you and go with him, to be rich and happy and—oh I must leave you, my dear brother. That is not happiness. How blessed to find a father and cruel to lose poor Jan.

*Jan*—[*leaning helplessly against a tree*] Good-bye, Magdalen.

*Mag.*—[*raising his head between her hands and kissing forehead*] Jan! Jan! my kind brother, don't do so. Don't. I'll come and see you again.

*Col.*—[*approaching to* MAG.] Come, my daughter; [*to* JAN. *taking him by the hand*] young man I thank you for all the kindness you have shown my child. If ever you are in want of a protector, my son, you shall find one in me. We are now going to Moll. Don't be sorry for your sister Monica's good fortune—that would not be right of you. Come as soon as you can; come and see us at Moll, at the Eagle, there we can spend some time together. Meanwhile, I must reward you, [*placing in* JAN'S *hands coins, which fall to the ground.*] Come along, Monica, you and Jan may again see each other at Mo l. [*He leads her.*]

*Mag.*—[*going reluctantly and looking back*] Good-bye, Jan! Good-bye 'till then.

[*They going slowly,* JAN *sinks to the foot of the tree—curtain falls.*] [*End of Act two.*]

[*A lapse of six years.*]

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—[*Interior of a cottage in Antwerpt*—BARBARA *knitting lace*—PETER *seated on the floor engaged at tailoring—surreptitiously stealing glances at a book, and rocks the cradle interim.*]

*Peter.*—I say it is a dog's life.

*Barbara.*—Tend the cradle and mind your needle! The Miller will soon be here for his clothes.

*Peter.*—I care not for all the millers in Antwerpt. It's a dog's life I say and—

*Barb.*—You ought to enjoy it then. It's yours. You wanted it, you got it, and now make the most of it.

*Peter.*—I got too much of it. I knew not what I sought. I would have had peace and learning—

*Barb* —And me to earn it for you. [*The child cries.*] Touch the cradle, fool, and hold your clapper.

*Peter.*—[*rocking the cradle*] Yes, my clapper may be blamed, as that it was that fooled me to ask a wife. Without a tongue I might have been without a woman, and without a woman I might have stayed in the pleasant valley of Kempen and lived at ease and had peace and plenty of learning, instead of being driven off here by an unruly wife, to hunt a vagabond brother-in-law, who brings himself to the death-bed by his wine and rioting.

*Barb.*—Without a wife (woes! a mercy me!) you was a filthy beggar and an idiot. Now I have made you clean and respectable and this makes you unhappy You miserable goose to talk about learning when you do not know how to hold a book—put it down and mind your needle and stir the cradle. As for poor Jan, who lies behind the curtains dying, it is an honor you don't deserve, to have him in the house. He did not spend his years in the seminary at Mechlin for nothing. He is as learned as a doctor and as good a gentleman as any of them. But he must make a fool of himself and die I fear, poor boy, about an idle, good-for-nothing white faced girl. Ach! Gott! It makes me sick! Poor Jan.

[*A knocking at the door.*]

*Barb.*—Come in! [*Enter old woman, knitting.*] Ha! granny, is it you? Sit. You sir, take the child to neighbor Nicholaus' and attend to it. [*Exit* PETER *with baby and book.*]

*Granny.*—How is your brother, to-day, Mistress Barbara. For a week I could not come for sickness at home.

*Barb.*—He is much improved; he talked of going out to day, and I believe myself a walk would do him good. But he sleeps now. Make as little noise as you can, granny. That rattle-box of a husband of mine, the worthless good-natured fellow makes so much talk and the baby cries some times so that I think it is enough to drive poor sick Jan crazy. He is having a nice sleep now; [*drawing the curtain for a moment*] look how quiet.

*Granny.*—God be praised! But you never told me how it all came about.

*Barb.*—Come away then and I will finish the story which I began when first you came to us.

After the girl was taken away by her father, with no thanks to us for taking care of the huzzy, who always gave mother so much trouble, Jan did nothing but mope about the trees.

He would refuse his meals and go out to work on the farm, but soon we would find him lying under the trees, as pale and weak as if dying. He couldn't work, and as he didn't eat it could not be expected. The good father Paul noticed it too and he talked to Jan days and weeks and at last pursuaded him to go to the University at Mechlin and study to be a priest and so forget the girl, and we all thought that was better, and he went. When his years in the school were done, he came to Antwerpt here and of him we heard nothing and I feared for him and packed our baby on Peter's back and I took our bundle and we came to seek him. First it was nothing. Days and days I walked on the hard pavement and asked but found nothing. Then I went among the hospitals, and there I found him weak and thin like one dead, and his eyes closed and he did not know me. I brought him here—

*Gran.*—But God be praised, you have had him here for five or six weeks.

*Barb.*—Going on six weeks.

*Gran.*—But where do you sleep yourself, then—only one room and one bed?

*Barb.*—Why I sleep here with my head on the table, and the baby sleeps in the cradle there, and poor Peter he sleeps on the hearth, soft-hearted man. He is not so bad after all. He never complains unless I grow impatient and make him angry, the kind fellow. I always was a fool about that man and when he is away I scold myself, and when he is here I scold him.

*Gran.*—God be praised! and about your brother?

*Barb.*—Oh yes, poor Jan! I'll tell you. Come this way a little, so that my clatter may not disturb him. The people in the hospital told me that about eight weeks ago, on a stormy Saturday night late, when the muddy streets were almost deserted, an outcry was raised by the watchmen, who were running about with their lanterns. And it soon appeared that one of them had heard a groan.

*Gran.*—God be praised!

*Barb.*—And there by a dead wall among a lot of old carts, was the poor pale boy lying on his back, his face covered with blood.

*Gran.*—God be praised! Covered with blood did you say?

*Barb.*—Yes indeed. His face was covered with blood which must have flowed some hours before, as it was cold and clotted. It appears as if he had fallen asleep on a market cart and tumbled off, and he laid there bleeding and senseless.

*Gran.*—God be praised! and dead?

*Barb.*—No, no, granny, not dead. How could he be dead when he is now sleeping quietly in my bed there. He was picked up and carried into the hospital where he lay 'till I found him as good as dead—

*Gran.*—God be praised!

*Barb.*—Well he raved in the hospital, and he raved here, but you could understand nothing of his mutterings—

*Gran.*—God be praised!

*Barb.*—Don't interrupt me, granny, for there is no occasion to give praises because he suffered so much.

*Gran.*—No, God be praised! I didn't mean it.

*Barb.*—But the people in the hospital heard him plainly enough in his ravings, calling "Magdalen—Monica," and sometimes he would rave in Latin, but of all things he never forgot, the old jangling tune that good for-nothing girl used to sing, that senseless "Ricketack." But now he is better and is glad to see me, which is pay enough for anything we have done for him. Still he does not tell me as much as I would like to know—

*Gran.*—God be praised!

*Barb.*—About his past six years and what he intends to do—anything he does is all right if he does'nt go for a priest or a soldier. Poor fellow, he is as thin as a lath and as white as a night-cap.

*Jan.*—[*from behind the curtain, faintly*] Barbara! Barbara!

*Barb.*—Hush! that's him. I must give him the cream and milk now. [*She carries the cup of cream to the bed and draws the curtains.*]

*Jan.*—I will arise and go abroad.

*Barb.*—I fear you are too weak yet. Is it not so?

*Jan.*—Nay. I am strong enough to go slowly and a walk will be beneficial.

*Barb.*—So, as you say. [*To the old woman:*] Softly let us go out, that he may dress. [*Exeunt*]

[*Scene closes.*]

SCENE II.—[*A street—enter* JAN, *meanly clad, and pale—he rests leaning against a wall.*]

*Jan.*—[*solus*] It is a blessed thing to look upon the sun once more, and inhale the unconfined air flowing fresh from the bountiful fields of my native plains, of beloved Brabant it may be, to cool this feverish city. Here lives Monica, but here I cannot remain. Still I long to see her once again. That pale face of which I got but a glimpse in the carriage when I fell, was not the index of a happy heart. Perhaps she has not yet forgotten the old days when I was her only reliance and defender—perhaps she would be glad to once more see that old friend to whom with tears in her eyes she said "Good bye 'till then." It was good-bye to peace and rest for me. But now I must go forward and take a last farewell. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—[*A drawing room*—COL. VAN MILGEM *in an easy chair*—MONICA, *with downcast eyes, at a table covered with embroidery-implements and material—She hums 'Ricketack.*]

*Col.*—Cease that tune, Monica, it re calls unpleasant memories of the past. You pass your life in endless melancholy.

Was it for this that you spent years in the brilliant schools and polished society of Paris? Where are all your accomplishments—your music, your drawing, your dancing, your cultivated conversation that I was assured you possessed? Here have I been but six weeks relieved from my last campaign over the Rhine, to which I owe this stiffened knee, and I find you ever weeping and moaning. I am not scolding, my daughter, but I would see you cheerful. Forget old times and tunes and make me happy by a smiling face.

*Mon.*—What! was I singing it again? Forgive me, father, for being so thoughtless of your presence, but I did not know it. I will try to forget it as I hope, for nothing but to make you happy, to give you what little pleasure I may for the long years of your never tiring kindness toward me.

*Col.*—When will the purse be ready, dear? Poor Adolph! how pleased he will be at the present—he loves you so.

*Mon*—Where is he now?

*Col.*—That's hard to tell. Who knows? Perhaps in the glorious field, or it may be, suffering in an hospital; if indeed a bullet has not already ended him.

*Mon.*—Oh father, father! You make me tremble.

*Col.*—What! do you tremble for him—then you do care for him?

*Mon.*—To be sure I do—as for a brother.

*Col.*—Ah Monica, you must care for him more than that. He deserves your love. He's a handsome young fellow, with every quality of head and heart to please a woman; and besides that he was with me through all my campaigns; he mourned with me for the loss of you and assisted to discover your presence when I had almost given you up for lost. He accompanied and cheered me in that long search, and more than all he it was who saved your father's life at Dresden. Even though love cannot find its way to your heart, gratitude should make you willing to follow my advice and my entreaties to reward him for his love and generous self-devotion.

*Mon.*—Look at me, father. What have I to give Adolph? My real love is all set on you; I have no heart for him. Shall I marry to make him unhappy with coldness and indifference? Surely a husband asks more of his wife than mere friendship! But beside that I feel an invincible disinclination to a tie that would deprive me of my liberty.

*Col.*—Of what liberty, Monica? The liberty to dream and brood over you know not what? Would to heaven you might lose this liberty which only wears and wastes you. Do but see my child what a happy life it will be for you when we take possession of our estate at Moll, from which I was called to be disabled in this last campaign. If you have a friend who can wander over the heath with you, visit the beech tree and the brook with you, and whom to both of us would be a companion

in our solitude, which without love becomes cold as death, I think we could both be happy.

*Mon.*—That may all be true father, but Adolph is no son of the heath. He would never understand the speech of the grasshopper nor the silent language of the butterfly. No fir-tree shades the play grounds of his youth, and the ocean-like immensity of the moor would seem mere monotony to him that is a child of the mountain. Ah father, confess it; between me and my darling heath he would stand as a stranger!

*Col.*—Have, then, your father's wishes no weight at all with you? For years I have been Adolph's earnest advocate with you and have done everything to bring you together, and still you refuse it me to join your lot with his. But why? Only that you may give up your soul to a dream that is killing you. You say that it is because you do not love him; he does not ask of you to love him.

*Mon.*—Not ask of me to love him? What then does he ask of me?

*Col.*—You compel me Monica to speak of things which should never else have passed my lips. For years past, my Monica, you have been hastening toward the grave which you are digging for yourself. I cannot look on you, my darling only child, without beholding the image of death at your side waiting to seize you. For years has my heart been tormented with the fear of losing you. This sword hanging over my head is wearing out my life too; it keeps me in a state of suffering which I cannot describe. I have opened my anxious heart to Adolph; I have told him that there is but one way of rescuing you from your dark broodings and premature death. I have myself besought him, entreated him to become a suitor for your hand. He had already saved the child and took upon him to save the child, and to this end broke off all connections, he gave up the cherished hope of living with his old father among his beloved mountains, to follow us to the barren heath. This he has done for your sake, that he may be your guardian angel, watching over you to drive away the evil spirit that threatens you. And can all this, Monica, awaken no more in you than mere commonplace gratitude? Is every chord in your heart dumb that the only answer you can give me is "No"?

*Mon.*—Father, I have been ungrateful toward Adolph and toward you; that I acknowledge with deep sorrow. But what is it you ask of me? Do you not see that what you desire is to destroy all remembrances of the past? If I consent to become Adolph's wife I cannot then but give him a prominent place in my heart; ungrateful I cannot be. I must repay his generosity with tenderness and affection even if I cannot give him passionate love. But then I should have to give up everything that remains to me from my former life and—

*Col.*—[*seizing her hand*] Dear child, that is the very thing; you must give up your dreams to save your life. Tell me that

you accept Adolph as your future husband; make me quite happy. My dearest child, say, I beg of you, say yes! Tell me that you accept him. [*Monica, agitated falls upon her father's breast.*]

*Col.*—My child; my child. Don't leave me any longer in uncertainty; say yes; [*kissing her forehead*] say yes for me!

*Mon.*—[*raising slowly*] Well then father, if it will make you happy—[*she raises her finger in a listening attitude.*]

*Col.*—[*alarmed*] What's the matter with you?

*Mon.*—Listen! listen!

[*From without.*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
The iron is warm,
Up with your arm—
Now, strike one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

*Col.*—[*angrily ringing for attendants*] I will know who it is that ventures to insult me here—that would throw at me in scorn the days which are past! [*Enter servant.*] There's some insolent fellow singing outside; take the other men with you and drag the scoundrel in; I'll see who the fellow is. If he resists use force.

*Mon.*—Father! what's that you say? What would you do? Use force? How do you know against whom? Oh God what sounds were those? [*Sinks into a chair with face hid on the table.*]

[*Enter servant.*]

*Ser.*—It's nothing but a poor beggar, sir, so weak and ill that he can hardly put one foot before the other. The poor fellow thought little enough of resisting; he's in the passage, had'nt we better let him go again?

*Col.*—No, no! I'll get to the bottom of this; there's something behind. Why are you in such a tremble, Monica? Do you then know this beggar? [*To the servant*] Bring him in.

[*Enter* JAN, *weak and trembling, between two servants.*]

*Mon.*—Ah Heavens! Jan! [*running forward and taking his hand.*]

*Jan.*—[*downcast eyes*] Yes, 'tis I.

[*Col. takes the remaining hand, and with* MONICA, *leads* JAN *to a chair*—MONICA *stands still, holding the hand*—COL. *sits opposite.*]

*Col.*—Jan Van Dael, how is this? Why did'nt you think of coming to me when you were in trouble? Did'nt I tell you that I would at all times help you and stand by you? And now what misery have you fallen to! But be easy; from this time you shall want for nothing Take heart; I'm not ungrateful and I've a great debt to pay you. [*Laying a handfull of gold on the table beside* JAN.] See, my dear friend, this is no alms

that I offer you, but a small return of what you formerly did for my Monica. I beg you will accept this from me as your friend.

*Jan.*—[*looking first at the gold then to* COL.] Money! ever money, and nothing but money. And yet money might stand me in some stead too; I could get me clothes and do something for those who did so much for me. But you must spare me that, Colonel; I couldn't take money from you, though I might buy off death with it. [*An involuntary movement withdraws his hand from that of* MONICA, *who retreats to a chair, with mournful eyes fixed on* JAN.]

*Col.*—But Jan, my friend, you are unjust to both yourself and me. If you won't take money, how else can I help you. It would make me happy if you point out the way in which I can serve you; and if you will do so I shall feel that you are only adding to the reasons I have to be grateful to you.

*Jan.*—You wish to do me a service? Well then I will ask a favor of you; will you grant it?

*Col.*—Speak, Jan; I will do whatever you ask of me. What is it you wish?

*Jan.*—To-morrow I am about to begin a new life, and mean to place an impassible barrier between myself and the past. It is not so easy to tear one's self from recollections that have grown fast into heart and brain—that make a part, and no little one, of our inward life; and in the struggle I might very well have fallen into the grave that seemed waiting for me. But now Providence has favored me. I find myself face to face with the only creature upon earth that can understand me. Let me only tell my story that she may know what my lot has been, and then I shall be able cheerfully to say farewell to the dream that is killing me. That, Colonel, is the favor which I have to ask of you. Let me speak out and don't be angry at what I shall say and you will give me more than life.

*Col.*—Speak my friend; I will listen attentively.

*Jan.*—I was young, contented with my lot, full of life and spirits. My heart impelled me to see a sister in a servant, and the more she had to suffer the more affection I had for her. It was a pure innocent feeling which imperceptibly took root in my breast, though afterwards it became a consuming fire. To this hour, Colonel, I feel my hand burn when I think of the Napoleons you put into it that day on the heath. You thought to console me for the loss of my sister with coin. That was a death-blow to me; that showed me at once the immeasurable extent of my calamity; despair took a fast hold on my heart, which your departure had so cruelly torn; I forgot everything but one thought, for which alone I lived. Nothing could console me, nothing calm me. I was useless at my work, indifferent to everything; I lived in a world of painful dreams. I saw my mother on a sick bed, but my heart had no room for any new sorrow. They tried to tear me away from my accustomed

scenes of life; they hoped that, removed from them, I should soon recover; but I resisted; remonstrances and supplications were alike lost on me. Why? Because the sky over the heath is bluer? Because the atmosphere is fraught with fragrance? Because the sense of boundless vision transported me? Ah no! *She* had lived and wandered there, and I knew every spot of turf her foot had pressed; every tree which her hand had touched; every plant which her tears had bedewed. I suffered because I regarded her as lost for ever. At last I yielded to my mother's prayers and tears and our old pastor's advice, and set off for Mechlin, there to study and to seek in the duties of the ministry, a protection against my recollections. Ah me! what sufferings did I not go through in the seminary! The acquisition of knowledge, the reading of the ancient authors developed my imagination more and more, 'till I became utterly a slave to my dreams. I avoided all companions and sought out quiet nooks where I could give myself up to revery and hum over and over her favorite tune. I was the jest of all my fellow-students; but that made just as little impression on me as the the rebukes of my teacher. At last the time came when I had to declare whether I would take orders or not. But God help me! how could I do that? I was unworthy to approach the altar; I declined and left the seminary. My mother had meanwhile died. I had still remaining something of my inheritance. I dreamed away my life in total recklessness. Regardless of the future, I consumed what little I had left. That year I fell into the uttermost distress; but that effected me not at all; I slept under the blue sky, under wagons, upon the ramparts. Nothing could move me or wake me up from my apathy.

[JAN *pauses—his breath is thick and heavy*—MONICA *leans her head upon the table and weeps convulsively*—JAN *proceeds.*]

One day as I was wandering half in despair along the Place de Meir, she that I had thought lost forever to me, passed rapidly in a carriage. The shock deprived me of my senses and I fell. How long I lay there or whither I was taken I only know from what I have been told. When I recovered consciousness I found myself under the care of a long forgotten sister, who with her husband had left the comforts of our old farm to search in poverty on foot and enduring many privations, for me, the miserable wanderer. For weeks I occupied their only bed, and their scanty earnings were devoted to procuring for me such remedies as were recommended by a physician. They had sacrificed everything for me and to them I owe the life which I had attempted to throw away as a worthless encumbrance. Now I have something to live for—to repay their love and kindness—to labor for, to discharge faithfully, so far as in my power it may be possible, a debt of everlasting obligation which I shall endeavor to make a pleasant duty. Now I shall go. Forget, Colonel, I beg, what trouble my existence may have caused

you, as I acquit you of all obligation to me for any services I may have rendered your daughter; forgive me the words I have spoken in my despair for the relief of an over-burdened heart; you shall never again hear or see aught of me. Farewell! and may God bless you! [*He arises and proceeds toward the door.* MONICA *dashing away her tears darts after and to him.*]

*Monica.*—Stay! oh stay! [*Dropping at* COLONEL'S *feet and thus:*] Ah forgive me! forgive me! forgive me, father! Keep him here or I die! His image too was one of those which floated before me in my dreams; he is my brother; he was my faithful protector; I love him! He alone it is that can save me. Oh! keep him here!

*Col.*—[*Raising* MONICA] So that was the mystery! What a heart! Be it so, Monica, my child. Belong to one another!

[JAN *sinks into a chair*]—MONICA *throws her arms about him.*]

[*Enter Barbara hastily*]—Where's the poor boy? He was seen enter the door. [*Turning sees* JAN *and* MONICA.] Ah! the white-faced one nurses him now—no use for me I suppose.

*Peter.*—[*entering with babe, thus:*] Oh here have we the renegade? Ah! I may return to my book now.

[*Enterer* GRANNY, *hobbling hastily.*]

*Barb.*—Too late, Granny! he's safe out of our hands.

*Gran.*—God be praised!

*Col.*—Welcome friends, all. True love has triumphed at last.

[*All.*]

Ricketicketack,
Ricketicketoo,
The iron is warm,
Up with your arm,
Now, strike one, two,
Ricketicketoo.

[*Curtain falls.*]

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